

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 13933 260928Z

14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 DLOS-06 COA-02 EB-11

COME-00 CG-00 DRC-01 /146 W
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R 260850Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7744

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN FUCHU

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13933

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI KS JA

SUBJ: ROK REACTION TO POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF JAPANESE
SELF-DEFENSE FORCE

REF: SEOUL 6941 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: HAVING REVIEWED NAKASONE'S OCTOBER 2 REMARKS
ON DEFENSE MATTERS, WE FIND THEM TO BE GENERALLY PEDESTRIAN.
KOREAN EDITORIALS ARE ALARMIST AND UNFORTUNATE. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED TAPES OF NAKASONE'S REMARKS AT TOKYO
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OCTOBER 2 WHICH WERE DEVOTED
MAINLY TO ENERGY QUESTION. WE FIND THAT HIS REMARKS ON
DEFENSE MATTERS WERE MUNDANE IF NOT PEDESTRIAN, WITH
POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF REFERENCE TO MSDF 1000 KILOMETER
DEFENSE BELT.

DETAILS:

A. RE CONSTITUTION, NAKASONE REITERATED HIS PET IDEA
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 13933 260928Z

TO HAVE CONSTITUTION "REVIEWED" BY THE PEOPLE SOMETIME AFTER

1975. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS CALLING FOR REAPPRAISAL, NOT REVISION, OF 30-YEAR-OLD CARTER.

B. RE SDF, HE SAID: QUOTE AS FAR AS SCALE OF DEFENSE IS CONCERNED, I THINK THAT FOR SOME TIME TO COME THE SCALE OF THE FOURTH DEFENSE BUILDUP PLAN, WHICH I ORIGINATED AND WHICH WAS AMENDED SOMEWHAT THEREAFTER, IS SUFFICIENT. I DO NOT THINK THERE WILL BE MUCH INCREASE BEYOND THE FOURTH DBP AFTER IT IS COMPLETED. UNQUOTE.

C. ASKED WHETHER MSDF MISSION INCLUDED DEFENSE OF MERCHANT SHIPS, NAKASONE SAID: QUOTE: WE ARE NOT THINKING OF EXPANDING OUR DEFENSE CAPACITY TO PROTECTION OF SHIPS IN THAT SENSE, NOR ARE WE CAPABLE OF SUCH EXPANSION. SDF ARE FOR PURPOSE OF DEFENDING JAPANESE ARCHIPELAGO AND ITS NEARBY WATERS, AND BEYOND THAT WE HAVE TO RELY ON GOD'S PROTECTION. UNQUOTE. WHEN PRESSED FURTHER ON NEED FOR PROTECTING SEA LANES, HE AID: QUOTE: AS FAR AS I REMEMBER, DEFENSE IS GENERALLY CONFINED TO NEARBY WATERS. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY AND NECESSITY FOR CONVOYING SHIPS, 'NAVIGATION BELTS' (HIS WORDS IN ENGLISH) WILL BE FORMED. IN SUCH CASE, THE FORCES SHOULD BE ABLE TO ESCORT WITHIN NAVIGATIONAL BELTS OF A THOUSAND KILOMETERS. UNQUOTE.

2. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, WE BELIEVE THAT KOREAN EDITORIALS ARE ALARMIST AND UNFORTUNATE. FURTHERMORE, OFF-THE-CUFF REMARKS BY JAPANESE CABINET MEMBERS DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL GOJ POLICY, EVEN ON SUBJECTS WITHIN THEIR BAILIWICK. NAKASONE'S REMARKS ON DEFENSE AT THIS TIME, THEREFORE, REPRESENT NOTHING MORE THAN VIEWS OF IMPORTANT FACTION LEADER WHO HAS SERVED AS AN EXCEPTIONALLY DYNAMIC DEFENSE MINISTER. JDA OFFICIALS, WHEN QUERIED BY EMBOFF ON SIGNIFICANCE OF 1000 KILOMETER DEFENSE BELT, SAID THAT IT IS CONVENIENT FIGURE USED IN DIET DEBATE, AND HAS NO RELEVANCE TO DEFENSE POLICIES.

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